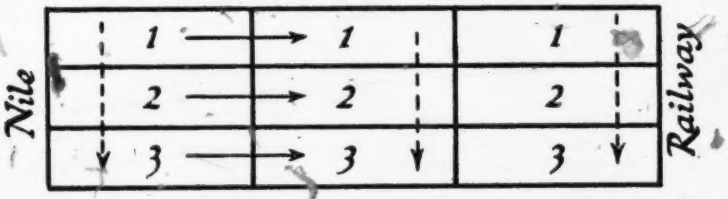
1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

according to their share as if they were renting it to their brothers. In cases of friction, the land is parcelled between the heirs, and boundaries are fixed; yet in the tax bill (wird) they are not divided and each has to pay his share of the tax, all being considered 'heirs of so and so'. This was originally a public demonstration of family unity. Lately, the separation of one's own land through official registration has been made an expensive task because of the fees required.

My informant, Mahmoud, told me that 'in these days, more often than not, heirs insist on dividing the land, and this occasions the hottest disputes between brothers, sisters and relatives. Law-suits over land have sometimes cost people the land itself, when they had to mortgage more and more parts of their land to establish their rights over another part. No one "yields a finger" in his share of his father's land; and above all, obstinacy and "the assertion of one's word" complicate the matter. Our life is mostly spent in setting my right and your right—hakki hakkak.'

The actual process of dividing the land is done lengthwise, from 'the sea to the mountain' as the villagers put it. The following diagram shows how it is done:



Suppose the above plot of land is to be divided equally between three brothers; each would receive a narrow plot extending lengthwise, in the direction of the lined arrow, and not breadthwise in the direction of the dotted arrow. The land stretches normally from the Nile to the railway station for more than a mile. It would be understandable that the villagers' division is better when the land varies in its fertility or ease of irrigation along that stretch. But this is always the practice, which involves more work in carrying fertilizer, and in irrigation. It also elongates the boundaries, thus providing more scope for breaking them and inviting trouble. The underlying notion behind this division, according to Mahmoud, is to share in every 'foot and finger' of the land that the father has bequeathed, irrespective of any other considerations, and hence there would be no difficulty in distributing the plots of land among the heirs. Such clinging to every bit of the father's land renders the mutual transference of land, for the sake of convenience, very difficult to achieve.

The main crops grown are wheat and barley in winter, and millet in summer. This applies practically to every farmer in the village, as these crops provide the basis of his subsistence. Before the perennial irrigation, one main crop in winter was the general produce, but now these two

175 The map of the world has been changed a hundred times, and with it the map of Egypt; but fundamentals have not changed and the fellaheen have remained the same.

They have taken the strain of all these changes, and never flinched. Violent and repeated shocks have swept away whole peoples, as can be seen today from the ruins of North Africa or Chaldea, which stand deserted in lands peopled by an alien race. But the fellaheen have held firm and stood their ground.

The history of Egypt includes wars and revolutions in plenty, but the people have taken no part in them. Only at one period, between A.D. 725 and A.D. 830, is there any mention of risings in the countryside. Crushed by the taxation of their Arab conquerors, the fellaheen abandoned the villages where they were born and settled elsewhere. [651 669] These evasive movements became almost general, but the repression was so severe that the Copts decided upon open revolt. Six times they rose, but without unity of plan or action. Six times they were savagely put down. They are not of the stuff of which rebels are made. Moreover, even in these revolts the mass of the people remained unaffected.

175 178 They are as impervious and enduring as the granite of their temples, and as slow to develop, once established, as this form of art proved to be. The glimpses of their daily life which we get from the wall paintings of Pharaonic tombs or from Coptic legend, from Arab historians or the "Description of Egypt" (*), from early English researchers or the travellers of our own day, seem to form a single sequence. We get the impression that all these scenes, though separated by so many centuries, only repeat and confirm one another.

105 178 This is not merely an impression. We can see the fellah using the same implements—the plough, the *shadûf*, the *saqia*, the winnowing-fork, the sickle and the straw basket; the same methods of treating the body—tattooing, circumcision, colouring with *kohl* and henna, plucking of hair; and many of the same marriage and funeral customs. Through the pages of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Maqrîzi, Vansleb, Père Sicard and Volney we can recognise the same fellah. No revolution, no evolution.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1
Turkish Egypt MR2

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In Egypt the productive area of about 11,000 square miles, representing a value of L.E. 435,000,000, is divided into State Lands (*miri*), entailed estates (*wakfs*) and private property (*milk*).

The State and the Land

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In 1813 Mohammed Aly, the founder of Modern Egypt (1769-1849), after seizing the possessions of the Mamelukes, divided their lands into village districts and distributed them to the villagers. Each cultivator thus obtained from three to five feddans in usufruct. Until 1840 he was subject to the system of monopoly. He had to deliver all his cotton to the Government depot at an official figure lower than the market price. On grain, which he was allowed to sell in the free market, he had to pay a tax of 18 piastres an *ardeb*. According to Moslem law the Sovereign — formerly the Sultan, Commander of the Faithful, but now his emancipated Viceroy — remained sole owner, in God's name, of all conquered land. However, estates conferred by former Sultans on private individuals, or granted to tax-payer farmers, and also *wakf* property, remained outside his control. Moreover, vast areas still uncultivated were excluded from the survey, exempt (until 1858) from taxation, and allotted with full rights of ownership to notables, high officials, or members of the ruling house, who were in a position to bring them under cultivation. This is the origin of the large estates.

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Small property came into being by a slow process which began with the subdivision of the land. In 1846 a fellah enjoying the usufruct of a plot was authorised to part with it by title-deed, while still retaining without question his right to re-acquire it. In the same way, after eviction for arrears of taxes, if later he could pay off the debt he could take back his field. Later on the children of the usufructuary were allowed to take over their fathers' fields; but this was only by Government concession, not by right of inheritance.

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In 1871 Ismail Pasha, hard pressed by debt, offered full ownership of their plots to all tenants who would pay six years' taxes in advance. This law met with only partial success, and was repealed in 1880. But the principle of fellah ownership was established; and the Government con-

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423 firmed it by selling plots of State land to small farmers year by year.

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651 661 At the same time the rate and the method of taxation remained arbitrary, and the whole system had become thoroughly corrupt. The High Commission of Enquiry into Property Taxation (1878-1880) discovered widespread abuses in every province. Agricultural production was suffering, and some form of equalisation was becoming an urgent necessity. But first of all a new survey had to be carried out, more scientific than that of Mohammed Aly, which was too legalistic in its distinctions.

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659 423 651 In 1892 the Survey Department, under the direction of English engineers, undertook the immense task of demarcation. After due consideration of roads, canals, and natural boundaries, the land of each village area, called *zimam*, consisting on an average of 2,000 feddans, was divided into sections (*hôds*) of 50 to 100 feddans of equal value and quality (with a variation of no more than 50%) and marked off by iron boundary-pegs. The cadastral plan of the village was drawn to a scale of 1 : 25,000 for all agricultural areas, then plot by plot on a scale of 1 : 2,500. It defined every *hôd* with its serial number and taxable value. The village site was shown as a single area and exempted from taxation. The survey register annexed to the plan gave for each plot in the *hôd* its position, its area in feddans and kirats, the exact tax and the owner's name (14).

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651 134 The work was completed in 1907, but in 1899 the Government already had sufficient data to establish a general rate of taxation, which was fixed at 28.64% of the revenue from the land, determined by its mean rentable value. The scale was fixed for 30 years.

This average, based on the estimates of Egyptian committees, takes into account the nature of the soil, its content of salt, sand and water, its distance from the Nile, and still more such factors of human geography as facility or difficulty of irrigation, the level of cotton production, proximity to town or village, the length of time for which it has been under cultivation, the availability of labour, communications and police, the balance of supply and demand ; in a word, the factors which make the price of a feddan vary between L.E. 40 and L.E. 180. Twenty-two different categories of land have thus been established, and the rate of taxation,

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

based on the same scale of value, varies between 14 and 164 piastres.

Law No. 143, of 1939, fixed the new tax at 16% of the rentable value of the land, according to estimates made throughout the country by special commissions, and based on the average rentals for the previous ten years. However, as before, the maximum tax cannot exceed 164 piastres per feddan.

There was no change in the date-palm tax, which until 1920 stood at 21 piastres per tree, with a five-yearly census; or in the irrigation tax, viz 50 piastres per feddan where *sêfi* irrigation could be carried out by natural means (free flow), and 30 piastres for land to which the water had to be raised by mechanical means (lift flow).

Rebates are provided for when crops have deteriorated owing to lack of water, or where irrigation would have been unduly expensive. The tax is payable by the owner alone.

The date of payment, as well as the rate, is fixed beforehand. It varies for each province, according to the times of the main harvests, and payments are made by instalments, so that at the end of the year the whole amount due for the 24 kirats composing each feddan is paid up. For example in Qalioubiya two parts are payable in January, three in March, three in April, eight in October and eight in November.

The tax is collected at the owner's house by a *sarraf*, and the demand note (*wird*), when countersigned, serves as a receipt. If, as often happens, payments are in arrears, the Government obtains payment by distraint and forced sale. For example, to take the *Journal Officiel* for January 1937 only, there are 732 seizures listed, almost all of quite small holdings. These seizures are always advertised in the same terms:

'January 19, 1937. 3 kirats belonging to Imam Imam Ibrahim, situated in the village of Kafr Mansour, Toukh Markaz, in Medawwar *hôd* No. 4, Lot 19, seized according to *procès-verbal* of March 2, 1936, in payment of arrears. Price L.E. 9.600 for the portion seized.'

The Government shows more patience with big landowners. 'It is not just', a *sarraf* once admitted to me. In practice there may be injustice, but the rate of taxation is quite just, and except in times of crisis not unduly high.

It merely presupposes a taxpayer whose financial arrangements are never unsound, and a yield with no great variation.

If then we add to the property tax (about L.E. 5,500,000) the excise from the sale of cotton and the revenue from State domains, the land provides the Government with about L.E. 10,000,000 a year, which represents about a quarter of budget receipts.

The State is also the chief landowner in Egypt. Apart from the estates included in Mohammed Aly's survey, but not bought by the fellaheen, the State acquired in 1878 the property of the Khedivial family, to pay off a part of the vast debts of Ismail Pasha, and has also enlarged its domains by reclaiming new areas in the region of the lakes and on the edges of the desert.

So out of an agricultural area of 7,000,000 feddans the State still holds one fifth, or 1,470,305. It cultivates directly 418,778 feddans, situated mostly in Lower Egypt. This immense untaxed property is in part mortgaged as security for the National Debt, and in part unproductive.

Every year, however, the Government brings under cultivation some 8,000 feddans of land formerly too marshy or too dry, and sells off the greater part of it in small lots to private owners. The State domains give work and a livelihood to about two million fellaheen, as either labourers or tenants. Another million work on land which they will never be able to own.

Wakf Lands

Since the Moslem conquest many landowners have laid all or part of their estates under a sort of entail (*wakf*) (''). This they have done partly for religious motives, but also in order to put their wealth out of the reach of confiscation by princes or dissipation by their heirs. This means that by a kind of religious dedication or donation to God they render their properties perpetually inalienable in law. There are two kinds of *wakf*. The revenues of *wakf khairi*, or charitable trusts, are consigned to mosques, schools, cemeteries, homes or other pious foundations. *Wakfs ahli*, on the other hand, are earmarked for the founder's descendants until the family dies out, when they revert to some religious purpose.

The Ministry of Public Works controls the irrigation of all cultivated land, settles the rotation of crops for each zone, watches over the embankments and canals, and, if the Nile threatens to break its banks, recruits the fellaheen necessary for their maintenance. 656

The Ministry of Agriculture regulates the acreage of cotton and rice, distributes and controls the selection of cotton seed, and levies the fellaheen needed to fight the boll worm or the locust.

The Ministry of Finance collects the land-tax through its *sarrafs* in each district, issues orders for seizures, buys cotton to maintain equilibrium in the home market, and by means of the *Crédit Agricole* attempts to systematise the finances of the fellah. 651 656 657

The Ministries of Education and Public Health oblige the fellah to improve his mind and his physique. 871

The Ministry of Justice, through the district courts, — and after agelong delays — condemns or acquits him. 692

The Ministry of National Defence arranges for his enterest, or collects the exemption fine. 702

The Ministry of the Interior, acting in the common interest, supports all this network of regulations and so ensures order and public security. 656

The Government system in its present form is less than a century old. It was established by Mohammed Aly, and has changed little in its working since. He did not so much create the machinery which deals with the fellah as systematise it after the disastrous and arbitrary rule of the Turks and Mamelukes. The founder of the reigning House thus raised over the heads of the fellaheen a system of law and order which makes it possible for them, if not to progress, at least to live. 175 64

Let us examine this hierarchy from top to bottom, and consider the relations of each authority with the fellah.

First of all comes the King. The last two sovereigns (not to mention others) have sincerely desired the well-being of the fellah, and frequently given proof of this desire. Their Ministers, however, are often more occupied with politics than with government, and travel far more in Europe than in the 643 645

exception. The fellaheen as a whole use no machinery at all. This is probably due less to habit or ignorance than to an instinct for self-preservation. If machinery is not more commonly used in Egyptian farming, the reason is that the owners find man-power more economical. For the moment the two points of view coincide. But it will not always be so. One day the fellaheen will increase their demands, and machines will become more profitable to the landowners. Manual labour should keep its leading place, however, for to mechanise labour in the Nile Valley would be to destroy the organic relationship which has grown up between the cultivators and their soil, and overthrow a balance now preserved by methods of labour appropriate to an abundant population.

2. Conditions of Work

To this soil the fellah devotes all his energies. He gives himself to it without reserve, even passionately when it is his own. But that is very rare. Here man belongs to the land, not the land to him. This is the true cause of both his lethargy and his poverty. None of the conditions under which he may labour make for freedom. Let us look in turn at each of the varying conditions which obtain today.

The Fellah as Forced Labourer

The *corvée* was suppressed in 1893, but continues to be legally applied in certain cases of public necessity. Then the fellah is mobilised by authority, torn from his field and his village, and sent to the spot where his services are needed.

It may be that the Nile flood threatens catastrophe. On such occasions hundreds of thousands of fellaheen are set to work day and night under the rod of officials and overseers to raise the embankments, build dykes, deal with any escape and watch the barrages.

Suppose a dyke is on the point of breaking. The fellaheen rush in a compact mass to the point of danger, each with his *fass* and basket. They heighten the dyke and buttress it with a great rampart composed of earth, rushes, palm-trunks, and — if need be — maize-stalks and sugar-cane.

In 1934 they saved the country by such efforts. The Government set aside L.E. 150,000 to fight the danger;

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it was used to buy materials and to pay travelling expenses and bonuses for officials. The fellaheen got no wages for their pains, no compensation for their enforced absence from the fields.

By law every Egyptian is liable to be enlisted in the fight against the flood danger. In fact, none but the fellaheen are ever called upon. However, according to the Speech from the Throne of May 1936, "No-one shall be employed henceforward on the embankments of the Nile or of the basins during the flood period without receiving appropriate payment (26)".

But there are other dangers which may threaten the prosperity of the country, cotton disease, for instance. To get rid of this pest a swarm of men, women and children must bend over the cotton plants from six o'clock till midday and from two o'clock till six, and search them row by row, plant by plant, leaf by leaf. Each infected leaf must be delicately nipped off and put into the lap of the *gallabiya*. If a single diseased leaf escapes notice the overseer just behind will see it and bring his stick down at once on the back of the culprit.

"I went up to one of these poor wretches toiling under the lash in the heat of the sun and asked him how much he got per day for his trouble: 2 piastres (26)".

In June 1936, for example, by virtue of the law of 1910, (27) a million young fellaheen were mobilised to save 435,785 feddans attacked by the pink worm (28), which devours the cotton bolls; it reproduces itself five times in a year. The Royal Agricultural Society is offering L.E. 20,000 to anyone who can find a remedy for this new plague of Egypt. Such a discovery would put an end to at least one sort of forced labour.

There is a third sort of emergency. About once every five years, the last time being in 1931 (the 1937 invasion was stopped in the desert), Egypt is attacked by vast swarms of locusts, which would destroy all the crops unless another host went out to meet them. Entire villages are transported to the worst affected areas (under the decree of 16th June 1891) to drive the swarms back to the desert or towards the sea. The method used consists in digging long trenches, keeping up smoke screens, shrieking, and flapping branches,

to prevent the locusts from settling and to hasten their departure. 466 731

A fourth case remains to be noted. It is usual, though not obligatory, for a fellah who wishes to keep in his omda's good books to work for him several days without pay. 651

The Fellah as Day Labourer

Day labourers are recruited *en masse* by a *rayess* or foreman to dig a canal, mend a road, or gather in a crop. Each man brings his own *fass*, and the whole gang carries out the required task under strict surveillance, like a gang of prisoners and often far from home. This drafting of men hired by a *rayess* into a locality where hands are short is called *tarhila*. For a twelve-hour day with a brief midday rest the pay is two or three piastres. A big landowner tells me that on his estate the fellaheen are usually paid three piastres a day, for either ploughing or working on cotton [29]. The *tarhila* is chiefly applied in Upper Egypt, where cotton is cultivated less, but labourers are more easily obtained and large estates are more common. It is also applied on State Domains which are under direct cultivation. 464 466 [465]

When day labourers are not attached to the estate they are subject to unemployment and want, except at times when big works make their help necessary. The more fortunate are engaged by the year, somewhat like the *obbligati* of Italy. Such men receive regular payment, partly in kind and partly in cash. For example, an owner lets a feddan to a fellah on credit. The wages for days spent at work for the owner are deducted from the rent payable. At the end of the year the fellah has a debit or credit according to the total of days he has worked. In other cases the fellah is paid only one piastre a day, but gets in addition the crop of maize from one feddan. 464

The temptation here is to work as little as possible. But it must be noted that owing to the abundance of hands the day labourer's wage remains extremely low. The changes due to the war have not increased it, and 5 piastres is a maximum rarely attained, whether for fellaheen, transport workers or small craftsmen [30]. Such wages are insufficient to support a fellah and his family, but a certain compensation is found in the traditional extras — the women's gleanings, 461 465

427 511 Then he added, "Since everything we had has been taken from us, we will steal." (22)

The Fellah as Landowner

423 554 183 We have seen that more than two million fellaheen possess a patch of land each. Four fifths of this number own a plot so small — from two kirats to one feddan — as not to suffice a family for either employment or support. Nevertheless among the rural proletariat these small landowners are the 'privileged class'. It is every fellah's ideal to get land, as it is to marry, have children, and own a *gamoossa*.

183 651 452 The owner of a small field has the same things to buy as a tenant: seed, manure, animals and implements (these last usually in partnership with others). He has no rent to pay, but is liable for taxes, and usually interest on debts. The fellah is a poor hand at finance, and rarely has any savings; he borrows money to buy seed or fertilisers, to rent a neighbouring field which will round off his patch, or even, instead of paying off his debts, to buy it.

452 427 Since the banks do not lend small sums, he borrows from private persons, who, in spite of the 1912 Law limiting the maximum interest to 10%, lend him at 30% or even 50%. The interest, if not the debt itself, has to be paid. However hard he works, himself and all his family, in an effort to make his field produce its utmost with the least possible expenditure, he is almost always caught on the wrong leg when the payment falls due. Then he has to hand over all the fruits of his labour, or else sell part of his land.

There is a law (of December 3, 1912) which forbids seizure of the 'homestead', that is to say, five feddans or less. This law, by denying the banks any guarantee for their loans, has prevented smallholders from benefiting by the legal means of credit, and thrown them into the hands of moneylenders.

The fellah must have credit. As often as not, by his own fault, he does not know how to make his loans pay; the harsh terms engulf him deeper and deeper in debt, and the more he borrows the worse he fares. Land debts are like a cancer devouring the small landowner (23).

423 432 However, the fellah who owns land is, in name at least, owner of its products, especially of the cotton, which the

273 as it is forbidden by his religion; he is in any case too poor to pay for it, and his head could not stand it.

272 Coffee was introduced into Egypt at the end of the fifteenth century by the Sufis of Yemen. The fellah drinks very little of it, far less than the people of Cairo("). However, when he goes to the market he may sip a small cup or two while playing backgammon with his friends.

Since the war of 1914-18, exaggerated tea-drinking, after a fashion introduced from Tripoli, has taken the place of coffee-drinking, and has become the rule not only where menfolk meet together, but also in the home. Fellah families are accustomed to drink tea several times a day, and in considerable quantity. Not only the adults, but the smallest of the children, too, feel a need for tea. The fellah takes his teapot with him to the field. The poorest spend at least 30 piastres a month on tea and sugar. When they have not enough money to buy any, they lie flat on the ground, incapable of activity. "In one village", says Mgr Khousam, Bishop of Thebes, "I asked what had happened to the animals, which constitute the fellah's capital. There are none, they answered me. They have been sold to buy tea. Tea has become as much a necessity as bread."

By boiling the tea till it turns black, a thick, syrupy liquid is obtained, rich in tannin and alkaloids, which sooner or later ruins the stomach and the nerves, weakens the whole body, and debases the character. But it is comforting and brings forgetfulness.

[439 651] This black tea has become the drug of the fellah. Imports have tripled in a few years. The Government has also raised the duty to three times its original figure, from two and a half piastres to seven, and then to eight and a half piastres a kilogramme, to put it out of the fellah's reach. But the evil has not diminished, for those who have acquired the habit will do without food and starve their families rather than give it up. On the contrary the increased tax has only hastened the ruin of the fellah and of his health.

Merchants mix tea-leaves scavenged from hotels, cafés, and ships, with sawdust, bean husks, and dry *molokhiya* or poplar leaves. This mixture, coloured and baked, they sell to the wretched fellaheen, when they cannot get tea by smuggling.

be feared. the village may stand on the level of the fields, barely visible, though always very compact.

A village may be situated anywhere. There is always water near, the soil and the contour of the land scarcely vary, so that the geographer cannot lay down hard and fast rules in explanation. History might have something to say on the subject, but who will ever know the past of those four thousand villages scattered far and wide along the Nile Valley? Their congestion, however, can be explained.

Not a square inch of ground must be wasted, especially if it is rich and well watered. In order to keep the cultivated area as large as possible, the unproductive space covered by human dwellings is reduced to a minimum. As we have seen, up to the nineteenth century the land and its cultivators belonged to the State and a few big landowners. The fellaheen had no interest in living on isolated farmsteads, all the more so because in that troubled period plundering Arabs or highway robbers would soon have despoiled them.

Moreover the village was the official unit for taxes, recruiting, judicial enquiries and the survey, so that it was essential for the villagers to remain within it. For these reasons, which still hold good today, the Government would not allow them to settle outside the village area.

These motives are now reinforced by certain new factors, such as the increase of population, the high price of land, and lack of space. The 1907 survey fixed the boundaries of the village areas once and for all.

A village may contain anything from a few hundred to several thousand inhabitants — 15,000 is not an uncommon figure — but it will always seem no more than one large family. Nothing is more like one Egyptian village than another Egyptian village. Here is another example of the monotonous uniformity which we have so often had cause to mention. There is a difference between the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt, as there is between the fellaheen of the two regions, but the likeness between them is far more striking. If an Egyptian of the older generation is shown photographs of several villages and asked whether they belong to Upper Egypt or the Delta, he will frequently give the wrong answer.

This is because the same kind of people and the same manner of life make for the same sort of villages. When

212 ideas, for the literary language in which books and newspapers are written is unfamiliar to them (72).

184 The weakness and the sufferings of the fellaheen arise from their abysmal ignorance in a fast-progressing world. The revival which has just been described only accentuates their isolation and dependence.

178 At the same time, if within the mass no substantial changes can be recorded, outside it some progress may be seen, and inside there are some signs of future evolution.

There is a certain growth in the sense of social responsibility. Progressive Egypt is beginning to pay some attention to unprogressive Egypt, clumsily it may be, by fits and starts, and as yet more in theory than in practice, but at least with the desire to help those who cannot help themselves.

641 Today the fellah has legal rights. He is no longer sub-
446 ject to forced labour at the good pleasure of his masters.
671 There is a code of law, and judges to apply it. It is true that the fellah does not always know how to make use of this, but the law exists, where formerly there was no defence.

641 'To put an end to the cruelty of the pasha, to let the
636 fellah's wife and frightened child have what belongs to them', such was the work of Lord Cromer at the end of the nineteenth century (73). This High Commissioner, who gave much thought to the fellaheen, used all his power to obtain for them at least strict justice. The lash was made illegal, and
[651 taxes were fixed at reasonable rates and periods. The fellah
681 is no longer in constant terror of the *sarraf*. He knows
731 how much he has to pay, and realises that if his field has
661] suffered from flood, drought or fire, the tax is remitted. The venality of officials and the selfishness of big landowners often nullify the benefits of these measures. But they have their effect.

In 1912 Lord Cromer's successor, Lord Kitchener, also caused a law to be passed in favour of the fellah, whereby the dwelling of the small farmer, his necessary implements, two of his cattle and five feddans were exempt from seizure. To make the fellah's finances sounder and accustom him to some kind of system the same High Commissioner established Savings Banks in the villages, where the fellah was to
[453] keep his savings. This institution, perhaps because it was

474 existed in Egypt for the last twenty years. The Government recognised them officially by the Law of 1923 (amended in 1927). It made advances to encourage their development and enable them to buy seed, manure, cattle, and implements, on better terms. Since 1931 it has entrusted this task to the *Crédit Agricole*. The change was successful. The number of societies grew from 147 in 1927 to 703 in 1935, and the number of co-operators rose from 12,298 to 71,000. In 1935 L.E. 836,000 was borrowed from the *Crédit Agricole* by 544 of these societies, the others being financed by private capital.

The advantages of these societies are evident. They do away with shady middlemen, systematise production and prices, improve both quality and quantity, and buy and sell at the best conditions (*). They have a clearly-defined aim of social service. "The various types of co-operative societies, put aside part of their profit every year to be spent in the various social services, village reform, education, hygiene" and so on.

It is in Lower Egypt, and especially Beheira, that these organisations have spread most. In spite of their success they leave untouched the vast majority of the fellaheen, especially those whose need is greatest and among whom the co-operative spirit is least developed.

656 The Government has passed a number of measures for the protection of these grown-up children :

[426] (1) The law against moneylenders (1896) by which the usurer, who goes too far, is made liable to a heavy fine.

[659] (2) The establishment of *halâka* cotton markets (1912) in which weights are checked and sales governed by current prices at the Bourse.

● [651] (3) The suppression of the tax on date-palms (1920).

(4) The suppression of the *ghafflr* tax, a watchman's toll which the fellaheen had to pay (1936).

744 657 If the fellah's economic activity needs to be organised and controlled by the paternal providence of the State, how much more do his health and his housing ! But here planning is far ahead of achievement. The question is whether to begin by providing all villages with drinking-water, or first to build model villages whenever possible.

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[464
857]

and even prejudicial to their health". La Patrie (a Cairo newspaper), 10th November 1936.

26. Al-Mussawar, Cairo, 28th June 1935.

27. [651] "Every male above 9 years and below 25 years of age who is accustomed to agricultural labour may be levied for such labour by the administrative authorities at the wage customary in the locality."

28. [249 136] Gelechia Gossypiella Saunders. The boll-worm properly so called is Earias Insulana, and the leaf-worm, also a great pest, is Prodenia Litura F.

29. [465] Proclamation No. 258 of 1942 fixed the minimum wage for this type of work at 7½ piastres a day.

30. Between 1942 and 1945 some rises occurred in wage rates, while the official cost-of-living index rose to 300 (1939-100).

31. [249] One feddan produces from 4 to 5 cantars of cotton, according to the quality of the seed. In 1936 there was a record average of 6.16 cantars.

32. Al-Ahram, 3.11.36. It should be noted that over-population affects the relation between supply and demand.

33. [426 735] The solution proposed by the authorities is that the Government should take over debts to money-lenders and deduct a small amount from the fellah's annual revenues until they are paid off.

34. Ernest Chantre : Recherches anthropologiques en Egypte : Rey, Lyons, 1904.

35. J. de Morgan : Recherches sur l'origine des Egyptiens : Leroux, Paris, 1909.

36. Dr. Abbas Pasha: Fixité de la race dans la femme Egyptienne : Bulletin of Royal Geographical Society, Cairo, Vol. VI, pp. 461-70.

37. Vonderheyden : Le Henné chez les Musulmans de l'Afrique du Nord : Journal des Africanistes, Paris, 1934, Vol. IV, pp. 55-61 and 179-202.

38. [302] There are various formulae, but the commonest have an antimony base, with an admixture of charcoal, lamp-black or soot.

643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are : Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts : the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

25.

[539] [461] [271] At work in the dust and heat, this longing sigh for the water-jug is quite intelligible. Of a hot day, one of the boys steals away every few minutes to snatch a hasty drink.

Ya ballāṣ aḥḍar u-mclān!
Ya giḍ'an, iḍ'u rēiskum.
Yalla ikfi šarr ez-zullām!

Thou moist, full water-jug!
You boys, beseech your overseer!
And thou, O Allah, make an end of the wickedness of the oppressors!

[192] 1. Aḥḍar has, beside its color-meanings green and gray (compare No. 21 note on l. 2) also the meaning "moist". For instance our servant, a youth from Saqqāra, would reply to the question: Is the wash dry? "Lā, lissa aḥḍar: No, it is still damp".

2. "Beseech" means, of course: "Beg him to stop the work".

26.

[651] [466] A reminiscence of the time when the excavations were carried on by forced labor (corvée). Not until the sun has run its course, can the workers hope for rest.

Ya samsĕ ḥiggi, balāš dalā'a;
di šuṛlĕ mīri wa-la fīšĕ šafā'a.

Wander on, O sun, put aside your airs!
For this is forced labor and there is no intercession.

2. Others said here: da šuṛl usiye, that is to say: "labor on the crown-lands".